

5 Ways “Cheaper-Priced” IT Firms Hide The TRUE Cost Of Their Services In Their Contracts

If you look through a dozen proposals from IT services firms, here’s what you’ll quickly discover: no two are alike. This makes it nearly impossible to compare one against the other and sort through all the legalese, “geek speak” and terms to determine if you’re getting a fair price or if you’re falling victim to a misleading proposal that will end up costing you far more than you were initially led to believe.

If you’re not careful, the “cheapest” or less expensive IT provider can end up costing you a lot more due to carve-outs and hidden fees in their contracts that they will later nickel-and-dime you over, or by quoting inadequate solutions that you’ll later need to pay to upgrade.

Here are 5 common things “cheaper” IT companies leave out of their initial proposal to fool you:

1. **Adequate cyber security protections are NOT included.** More specifically, you need to make sure the IT company you’re talking to isn’t just putting a basic (cheap) antivirus software on your network and calling it done. Antivirus is good but woefully insufficient to protect you. In fact, insurance companies are now requiring protection such as employee cyber-awareness training, 2FA (2-factor authentication) and what’s called “advanced endpoint protection” just to get insurance coverage for cyber liability and crime insurance. We provide those standard in our offering, so not only do you greatly reduce your chances of a cyber-attack, but you also avoid being denied an important insurance claim (or denied coverage, period).
2. **All disaster recovery services and setup are NOT included.** Make sure your IT company includes nightly off-site backups of your servers, workstations and Office 365 (if you use that technology). Another question to ask is, if your server, workstations and data were destroyed, would they charge you extra to restore them?
3. **Support outside of normal business hours and on-site visits is NOT included.** This is another area that takes many business owners by surprise: all after-hours and on-site visits involve an extra fee. They might also charge you extra to set up a workstation for a new employee in addition to the support fees and extra for any type of normal and customary support pertaining to Office 365, such as setting up shared mailboxes, distribution lists, spam and security settings and more. We include ALL of this in our agreements so you aren’t nickel-and-dimed for every request.
4. **Vendor liaison and management is NOT included.** Some IT firms will charge you hourly to resolve issues with your phone system, ISP, security cameras, printers and other devices they didn’t sell you but that still reside on the network (and give you technical problems). As a client of ours, you get all of that INCLUDED, not charged extra.
5. **Support for computers outside of warranty involve an EXTRA fee.** Another little “gotcha” you might not notice is that many IT companies will charge you extra for any support or troubleshooting if the computer they are working on is outside the warranty period. While we certainly advise replacing any computer that is 5+ years old or no longer safe to use, we won’t charge you extra for supporting a PC because it is past the warranty expiration.

The Cheap IT Provider

Computer Depot Business

Cyber Security Protection

No NextGen Antivirus.	NextGen Antivirus that can reverse ransomware damage to your files included.
No e-mail security.	Virus, phishing and spam protection for your e-mail accounts included.
No dark web monitoring.	Monitoring the dark web and notification of users when their passwords are exposed included.
No phish testing.	Periodic phish testing and training to be sure your employees can recognize an e-mail scam included.

Disaster Recovery Services

No server backups.	Nightly local and off-site server backups included. You cannot restore your server from a disaster without backups.
No e-mail backup.	Daily backups of Office 365 e-mail included. Whether Outlook has a bug and deletes all your e-mails or you realize months after a termination that you need to see an ex-employee's e-mails, backups are critical.
No OneDrive/SharePoint backup.	Daily backups of OneDrive and SharePoint included. When you delete a file from Office 365, it is permanently removed from their system in a few weeks. It is critical to maintain long-term backups to keep your data safe.

Billable Services

Support outside 8–5 M–F BILLABLE.	24/7 support included. If a user cannot print at 7:00 a.m. or needs help connecting to Outlook at 5:30 p.m., you will not be billed for it.
Workstation setup BILLABLE.	Setup of a few workstations each month is included. Why pay more for this?
Advanced Office 365 administration BILLABLE.	All Office 365 administration included. From setting up external e-mail warning banners to configuring security settings and MFA or block lists, allow lists, shared mailboxes, distribution lists and Active Directory Synchronization, we do not bill extra.
On-site support BILLABLE.	All on-site support included. We know that it often requires a person in the room to address an issue and we do not think you should pay extra for that service.
Computers outside warranty BILLABLE.	We strongly advise replacing any computer that is 5 years old, but we will repair what you own if it can be repaired and we will not charge you just because it is past the warranty expiration. (Note: We don't repair laptop screens.)

Support for 4-year-old laptops BILLABLE.	Support for ALL laptops included. No age discrimination here.
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Vendor Management

Phones excluded.	We work with your vendor to resolve computer and network conflicts with their systems and keep you out of the middle.
HVAC excluded.	We work with your vendor to resolve computer and network conflicts with their systems and keep you out of the middle.
Access controls excluded.	We work with your vendor to resolve computer and network conflicts with their systems and keep you out of the middle.
Cameras excluded.	We work with your vendor to resolve computer and network conflicts with their systems and keep you out of the middle.
Printers and copiers not mentioned.	We work with your vendor to resolve computer and network conflicts with their systems and keep you out of the middle.

Contract Terms

Price can be raised based on support activity with no up-front details about how much.	Our price is fixed for the term of our agreement no matter how busy your users keep us.
Price can be raised for inflation with no up-front details about how much.	Our price is fixed for the term of our agreement no matter how bad inflation is.

The comparison above makes it clear that going with the cheap option for your company's IT service needs may not be the best choice. If you have just a few occurrences of billable service in a month, the savings becomes a loss and the cheap provider is doing NOTHING to keep your network safe from ransomware and NOTHING to protect your cloud-based systems.